

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

212 East Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Post Office Box 7984
Madison, WI 53707-7984
Voice (608) 266-8005
Fax (608) 267-0500
E-mail: gab@wisconsin.gov
<http://gab.wi.gov>



JUDGE GERALD C. NICHOL
Chairperson

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

MEMORANDUM

TO: All County Clerks and the Milwaukee County Election Commission
All Municipal Clerks and the Milwaukee City Election Commission
Voting Equipment Programmers and Ballot Printers

FROM: Michael Haas
Elections Division Administrator

Diane Lowe
Lead Elections Specialist

DATE: October 7, 2015

SUBJECT: Ballot Formats for 2016

Background

Last fall, G.A.B. staff initiated a process to seek input from clerks and interested parties before finalizing recommended ballot formats. Staff is again soliciting your suggestions and comments with respect to the proposed ballot formats for 2016. The proposed ballot formats will be presented to the Board for approval at its October 20, 2015 meeting. Any comments and remarks received by interested parties will be included in the presentation.

The draft ballots are posted with this memo. There is one sample optical scan ballots (either arrow or oval) and one sample paper ballot for each of the regularly-scheduled 2016 elections:

Election	Paper Ballot	Optical Scan Ballot
Spring Primary	GAB-208	GAB-208mc
Spring Election Presidential Preference Vote	GAB-209 GAB-204	GAB-209mc
Partisan Primary	GAB-201	GAB-201ms
General Election	GAB-203	GAB-203ms

I have also included the reverse side of a paper ballot (GAB-229)

Key Considerations in Ballot Design

- The draft ballots incorporate the requirements set out in Wis. Stat. §§5.51-5.56 and 7.08(1)(a). These include: Ballot title (Official Ballot...), Notice to Voters, instructions for multi-candidate elections (Vote for 1, Vote for not more than...), and an endorsement section which includes a space to identify ballots required to be remade.

- **Left-Justified Text:** Generally, all text is left justified except for major titles which are centered. This is based upon recommended practices in graphic design because text is read from left to right, not from the center out. Flush left alignment is easier on the eye and more legible.
- **Font and Case:** All text uses a sans serif font (Arial). A sans serif font is plain, without the ornamental line attached to the end of a stroke in a letter or symbol. Lower case letters make easier-to-recognize shapes than capital letters.
- **Instructions and Navigation:** The instructions are plainly stated, provide examples of a properly filled in oval or completed arrow and inform the voter who to contact if he or she has questions. Navigational cues appear at the end of each column and at the bottom of the ballot itself.
- **Shading and Lines:** There are generally two types of shading: Reverse shading (white on black) to indicate the type of office (Judicial, County, Municipal, etc.) and important instruction, and light grey to set off the offices. On the partisan primary ballot, the reverse shading denotes the political party. Dark grey indicates the type of office (Congressional, Legislative, etc.), and light gray sets off the offices. A line separates the office title from the candidates. Lines also appear between candidates' names, which is a preference the Board expressed last fall.
- **Note:** Due to the limitations of the software used to prepare the draft ballots, the ovals and arrows may not line up vertically and may not appear flush with the candidate names. When printed as an actual ballot, ovals/arrows must be positioned in line with candidate names.

Ballot Status Parties

Five parties have qualified for ballot status in Wisconsin for the 2015-2016 election cycle. "Ballot status" entitles a party to a separate ballot or separate column at a partisan primary, and permits an indication of a candidate's party affiliation at the general election. Ballot status parties appear in party order at a partisan primary, and candidates are listed in party order at a general election, as provided by law. The current ballot status parties, in order, are:

Republican
Democratic
Constitution
Libertarian
Wisconsin Green

Partisan Primary

In municipalities where hand-count paper ballots (GAB-201) are used, separate party ballots are prepared and stapled together in party order. All offices up for election appear on each party ballot. The voter chooses the party ballot on which he or she chooses to vote. The voted ballot is placed in the ballot box and the unused ballots are placed in a discard box.

Where optical scan voting equipment is used, the ballot (GAB-201ms) is divided into party sections. All offices to be voted on are listed within each party section. The voter must vote in only one party. The optical scan equipment is programmed to prevent crossover voting.

In a partisan primary, some parties will have only one candidate or no candidates for many offices and other parties may have three or more.

General Election

At the general election, the ballot is not divided into party sections. Candidates who prevailed at the primary appear in party order under the respective offices. Independent candidates also appear on the general election ballot. The names of independent candidates appear under the office for which they are running and are listed after the party candidates. As many as five party candidates plus any number of independent candidates may appear in one office. Independent candidates may be identified by the word “independent” or by a five-word statement of principle.

Solicitation of Suggestion and Comments

Please examine the draft ballots and offer your comments and suggestions by email to gabpubliccomment@wi.gov by October 16, 2015. Thank you for your input.

If you have questions, please contact the Diane Lowe at 608-266-3276 or diane.lowe@wisconsin.gov.

Attach. (10)